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ABSTRACT

The project is designed to support the school district's voluntary desegregation plan by providing a highly individualized program to attract pupils from outside the school boundaries. A Bilingual-Bicultural Learning Center and supportive instruction personnel were installed in the school to help with the variety of needs of the individual Hispanic and non-Hispanic students. Project management devoted the first grant year to obtaining and organizing the human and material resources for the program of individualized instruction. The instructional materials, Bilingual-Bicultural Learning Center, and the classroom aides funded by the new project will provide additional support to pupils whose skill levels deviate from the skill levels of the majority of pupils of their language group and grade. Initially, the individualized instruction in English as a second language (ESL) is to be targeted to the Hispanic students in beginning and advanced level ESL in grades 3 to 5. The individualized Spanish as a first language instruction is to be targeted to first- and second-grade Hispanic pupils whose achievement in their first language is substantially above or below that of their classmates. The Spanish as a second language instruction is to be targeted to English dominant pupils who are able to do more advanced work than their peers. It is concluded that the first year of the project was successfully devoted to the installation of the human, instructional, and equipment resources needed to provide increased individualization. (RW)

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EVALUATION OF THE POTTER-THOMAS BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT

1981-1982

Report #8330

Prepared by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Potter-Thomas Bilingual-bicultural Magnet Elementary School project was designed to support the District's Voluntary Desegregation Plan by providing a highly individualized program to attract pupils from without the school boundaries. A Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center and supportive instructional personnel were installed in the school to help with the variety of needs of the individual Hispanic and non-Hispanic students who were currently attending the school or who would be attracted to the school.

As a result of the October 1 funding date and an ongoing teacher strike, project management devoted the first grant year to obtaining and organizing the human and material resources for the program of individualized instruction, while the pupils continued in the bilingual maintenance program that was already in operation.

When the grant year ended, on September 30, 1982, the bilingual resource specialist and most of the bilingual classroom aides who would be involved in the new program were on staff, a variety of equipment for individualized instruction was installed in a Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center, staff development had been conducted, and the pupils who would use the center had been identified and were about to begin using it.

Pupils were pretested in the spring and the data were available for subsequent use in program evaluation. The planning of new tests to be used in the project was begun, but no new locally developed tests were ready to use.

Implementation of many of the pupil recruitment steps that were designed to turn the school into a magnet was deliberately delayed until the second grant year, when the new elements of the program would be fully operational.

The students who were attending the school from outside the local school boundaries were all minority group members, as were nearly all the other students at the school. Most of the pupils who resided outside the boundaries had previously attended the school.

In conclusion, at the end of the first project year the key elements of the new instructional program were in place. Children were served by the bilingual program that had been operating at the school, but had not yet used the learning center equipment for the individualization of instruction.

POTTER-THOMAS BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL MAGNET

Introduction

The Potter-Thomas Bilingual-bicultural Magnet Elementary School is designed to support the Voluntary Desegregation Plan of the School District of Philadelphia by providing the opportunity for minority and majority group pupils to participate in a bilingual-bicultural magnet program. The emphasis of the new program is individualized instruction, provided through the use of a variety of instructional equipment located in a Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center and through small group instruction. It is anticipated that the individualized instruction will attract White, "majority group," pupils from outside the regular school boundaries and improve the academic performance of the children for whom Potter-Thomas is the neighborhood school. Intercultural activities should improve pupils' understanding of the value of their own and other ethnic groups' contributions to our national culture.

Rationale

Since 1969, the Potter-Thomas school has been providing a structured, sequential curriculum in English and Spanish in all academic areas. The instructional materials, Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center, and the classroom aides funded by the new project will provide additional support to pupils whose skill levels deviate from the skill levels of the majority of pupils of their language group and grade. Initially, the individualized instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is to be targeted to the Hispanic, beginning ESOL level and advanced ESOL level pupils in the third, fourth and fifth grades. The individualized Spanish as a first language (SFL) instruction is to be targeted to first and second grade Hispanic pupils whose achievement in their first language is substantially above, or substantially below, their classmates'. The Spanish as a second language (SSL) instruction is to be targeted to English-dominant pupils (of both Hispanic and English speaking backgrounds) who are able to do more advanced SSL work than their peers. The array of services offered in the Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center may be modified if other subject areas and target groups need more attention than the ones chosen when the program was begun.

The project will include a variety of multicultural activities. Newsletters the media, parent and community groups, and the School District's administration are to be used for pupil recruitment.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The primary goal of the first year of the project was to lay groundwork for the program. To accomplish this goal, project staff were to be appointed. The new staff was to acquire the instructional equipment and materials and install the Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center.

In subsequent years, the program is expected to improve the level of attainment of pupils at the school by providing increased individualized instruction to pupils who can benefit the most from it and to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school's pupil population.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The project was funded on October 1, 1981 while the School District was in the midst of a strike by the teachers' union. After the strike ended (October 27, 1981) it became evident to project personnel that most, if not all, of the remainder of the school year would have to be devoted to program planning and implementation. In an interview with project evaluators during February, 1982, the principal of the Potter-Thomas School stated that several months were still required for program organization and implementation and that she expected the individualized education program to begin serving pupils in September, 1982.

The proposal describes a variety of program implementation activities and objectives. These became the basis for the 1982-83 evaluation. In the interim, the bilingual maintenance program that was begun in 1969 continued to serve the English-dominant and Spanish-dominant children at the school.

The bilingual maintenance program offered bilingual instruction in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade in 1981-82 (in 1982-83 a fifth grade is to be added). Both English-dominant and Spanish-dominant pupils had instruction in Spanish and English. The amount of instruction in the first and second languages varied with the pupil's linguistic background, grade level, and degree of second language acquisition. The second language instruction included language arts as well as other subjects and, for pupils who needed help the most, sessions with specialist ESOL teachers. Most of the teachers in the school were bilingual in English and Spanish, but taught in their stronger language. A few teachers who competencies in English and Spanish were both very high, taught in both languages to self-contained classes.

EVALUATION OF THE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: The bilingual personnel needed to operate the project will be employed or assigned to it during the Spring of 1982.

The objective was considered attained. By the end of the grant year, September, 1982, the bilingual resource specialist and four (of an anticipated six) teaching aides had been appointed.

The position of resource specialist, the person who manages the Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center, was advertized in late 1981. By February, 1982, an experienced, bilingual, Spanish-dominant teacher was appointed and began organizing the center. A classroom aide was assigned to the project in March.

In September, 1982, four additional aides were assigned to the project. One was scheduled to return from maternity leave, and the others began work in early October.

An evaluator's conversation with the aides indicated that they were of Hispanic origin and spoke English and Spanish. A bilingual member of the evaluation team and the resource specialist found all the aides to be experienced and fluent in both languages.

Objective 2: The instructional materials and equipment for the Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center will be obtained and installed by September, 1982. The steps will include:

- *The identification of an area within the school to house the center.*
- *The acquisition of instructional materials and equipment for the center for the teaching of reading and other subjects in Spanish and English.*
- *The installation of audio-visual equipment.*

This objective was attained. Classroom space for the center was identified, a wide variety of materials and equipment was acquired, and, except for the installation of additional electrical outlets for some of the devices, the audio-visual equipment was in place and ready for use by September.

During the spring of 1982, a full size classroom was designated as the learning center. The room was divided into seven areas by the resource specialist. Each area was set up for a different type of activity. There was a mathematics section, a reading corner, an area for teacher-led small group activities, a writing area, and areas of the room to house electrical equipment. The areas were separated by low pieces of furniture such as tables, book cases and shelving. The resource specialist had made movable screens that could be used to increase the privacy of an area when needed. The center was decorated with colorful, teacher-made instructional devices.

The center was well lit; the lay-out afforded easy pupil access to the equipment. Despite the large amount of equipment and material, the overall impression was uncluttered, and the ten to fifteen children who were expected to use the center at any one time should be accomodated easily.

The audio-visual instructional equipment acquired for use in the center is described in Table 1. Learning kits have been purchased for six of the devices, giving the learning center staff access to a variety of instructional approaches. Most of the audio-visual equipment can be used with teacher-made, as well as published materials. This is an important characteristic because only a few published kits were available for instruction in Spanish.

A large portion of the resource specialist's time, during the Spring of 1982, was spent on the development of Spanish and English materials for teaching phonics, vocabulary, and mathematics and story kits consisting of pictures and cassettes. When the evaluators examined the locally prepared materials, they were impressed by their attractiveness and by their apparent usefulness for individualized and small group instruction.

Objective 3: Levels 1-10 of the Philadelphia Mastery Levels Tests in Mathematics will be translated into Spanish.

This objective was partly attained. Levels 1 to 5 of the Philadelphia Mastery Levels Tests were translated into Spanish by the Potter-Thomas School site coordinator.

Two of the five translations were examined carefully by the evaluators. The translations of most items were literal presentations in Spanish of their English equivalents. The Spanish and English versions were layed out in the same way on the test booklet pages, the identical illustrations were used, and the problems contained the identical numerals and involved the identical arithmetic operations and concepts.

There were many small differences in the translations that might change the item difficulties or make the items harder to score than the originals. In several items, the dashes and boxes that indicated the place the pupil was to write the answer did not appear. There were items in which non-standard Spanish names for United States coins were used. The evaluators believe that the differences between the Spanish and English tests were great enough to warrant an additional review of all the translations by a bilingual teacher who is conversant with elementary school mathematics before the Spanish versions are printed.

Objective 4: A recruitment program will be conducted before October, 1982, with the goal of attracting pupils who live outside the regular boundaries of the Potter-Thomas School, thus creating the magnet program.

The program will include:

- *News releases sent to newspapers.*
- *Announcements on radio programs.*
- *Pupil recruitment by the parents advisory group.*
- *Notification to all elementary school principals describing the program and asking them to identify pupils who can benefit from participation.*

This objective was partially attained. A news article was prepared, but not published before the end of the funding year. Contact with parents' groups had taken place as proposed. Within the school, efforts had been made to encourage pupils who were about to move outside the regular school boundaries to continue to be enrolled in Potter-Thomas The principal and the project supervisor said that the pupil recruitment activities were kept at a moderate level because the new program was not underway.

The project director reported attending two parents' meetings and a meeting of the Parents' Advisory Group during the spring of 1982. Project plans were discussed, and the director asked those present to tell other parents about the new project and encouraged them to enroll their children at Potter-Thomas.

The monthly newspaper, Reflections, is devoted to the Voluntary Desegregation Plan and is published by the School District. During the spring, a writer and a photographer visited the school. The article they were to prepare had not appeared in Reflections before the month of October. It was expected to appear later in the school year.

The principal reported that during the spring and early fall, when a pupil moved outside the normal boundaries of the school or was found to be already residing outside them, school staff contacted their parents. The parents were given the opportunity to have their children remain in the school. School records indicated that there were 58 pupils residing outside school boundaries in September. Forty-five were Hispanic, 13 were Black, and none were non-Hispanic White.

Objective 5: Program staff will, with the advice of supervisors and evaluators, select or develop a test of aural comprehension in Spanish to evaluate English-dominant pupils' understanding of spoken Spanish.

This objective was considered partly attained. The project site coordinator, the evaluators, and the project director examined a list of language arts micro-objectives that had been the basis of checklists and an oral test that had been used to evaluate second language learning at the Potter-Thomas school in the past. The program staff had not decided whether the micro-objective list was an adequate sample of the current Spanish second-language instruction at the school.

Objective 6: Pupils will be scheduled into the center in September, 1982.

This objective was partly attained. As of the end of September, pupils who were to use the center were identified, and schedules for center use were written, but not yet implemented. During the fall, before pupils could use the center, the assignment of the pupils to levels within the school-wide Spanish and English reading cycles had to be effected. This assignment involved testing some pupils to determine their instructional level as well as organizing the reading classes.

The program coordinator of the school, a management person who was not specifically a part of the new project, left the employ of the School District in June, 1982. Until a new program coordinator was found, all of the responsibility for the placement of pupils in the various reading activities fell upon the resource specialist in charge of the center. This staff transition delayed the opening of the center. The resource specialist anticipated that the center would be functioning by the latter half of October.

Objective 7: At least 10 hours of staff development in the areas of the individualization of instruction, the use of the resources of the Bilingual-bicultural Learning Center, or ethnography will be provided for the instructional staff.

The objective was attained. During the spring of 1982, a series of workshops was offered to thirty-six teachers, aides, and supervisors, who were expected to work with the pupils to be served by the learning center. The program consisted of six two-hour workshops that were conducted over a six week period after school hours. They were held at the Birney school, which has an individualized learning center. Examination of the record of payments for participation in after-school staff development indicated that the average workshop was attended by 21 Potter-Thomas staff members.

Two programs were presented at each workshop: one about individualized instruction and the learning center; the other about the teaching of reading in the ESOL classes. The material was arranged so that the people who attended all six workshops participated in both programs. The leaders of the workshops were experienced teachers who work with limited-English-proficiency pupils, one as the coordinator of the Birney School individualized learning center and the other as an ESOL teacher.

The resource specialist spent an additional six days at the Birney School's individualized learning center, observing and participating in its instructional activities. During the spring, two program aides visited the Philadelphia Teacher Parent Center to learn about the use of various types of materials and equipment. While on summer vacation the program coordinator reported observing a bilingual learning center laboratory at the Shenandoah Elementary School in Miami, Florida. She also reported that she took advantage of a trip to Colombia and Bolivia to research material in the instruction of Spanish as a first language.

Objective 8: The following testing will be conducted to establish baseline information:

- *English dominant pupils will take the Stanford Early School Achievement Tests (Kindergarten) and the California Achievement Tests (Grades 1-4) in March.*

. *Spanish dominant pupils will take the following tests between April and June:*

a) The Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Word Study Skills and Mathematics Computation subtests of the Stanford Achievement Tests (Primary Level I for grades 1, 2, and 3, Primary Level II for grade 4)

b) The CTBS/Español Reading subtests (Grades 1-4)

. *Spanish-dominant pupils who attend "pull-out" ESOL classes will take the Test of Aural Comprehension in April.*

This objective was considered attained. The plans for testing pupils were modified after the objective was written. The modified plans were fully implemented.

The English-dominant pupils were tested as part of the annual City-Wide Testing Program. Fifty-eight English-dominant Kindergarteners were tested with the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT). Three hundred and fifty-eight English-dominant pupils in grades 1-4 were tested with the California Achievement Tests (CAT). The English dominant pupils were identified by their language usage and instructional program, not their ethnic origin, and some Hispanic pupils were in the English-dominant group.

The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) subtests specified in the objective were administered in the spring to the Spanish-dominant children in the project who attended grades 2-4. First grade pupils were excluded because many of the pupils in the English instructional sequence for Spanish-dominant children do not begin to read English in the first grade. A total of 175 pupils took the SAT, with the second and third graders taking Level I and the fourth graders taking Level II.

The Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension subtests of the Spanish edition of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS/Español) were administered in the spring to the Spanish-dominant pupils of grades 1-4, as planned. Level B was used with grades 1 and 2; Level C was used with grades 3 and 4. A total of 219 pupils were tested with the CTBS/Español.

The Spanish-dominant pupils in the "pull-out" ESOL classes were not tested with the Philadelphia Test of Aural Comprehension. The statistical design to be used with this instrument in 1982-1983 is based on the comparison of project pupils with pupils in Chapter 1 ESOL classes across the city and does not require pretesting.

The SESAT and the CAT were administered by classroom teachers, as they are in regular classes across the city. To promote uniformity in the administration of the SAT and the CTBS/Español, they were administered by a member of the Evaluation Team and by the Potter-Thomas School's program coordinator. The test administrators were bilingual and used both Spanish and English when instructing the pupils about how to take the SAT and the CTBS/Español.

Objective 9: A summer program, to tell parents about the new project, will be conducted in July or August 1982.

This objective was not attained. Project PACT, a Title VII program in which Hispanic parents are taught how to help their children with school work, and in which the children attend enrichment classes, was conducted at the school during the summer of 1981. Although Potter-Thomas personnel reported that the new magnet program was mentioned from time to time in Project PACT, there was no concerted effort to tell participants about it. Project PACT was monitored extensively, and none of the observations indicated that the Potter-Thomas Bilingual-bicultural Magnet program was discussed.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In contrast to many new programs that try to begin serving pupils before key elements are in place, great care has been taken that the unique instructional components of the Potter-Thomas Bilingual-bicultural Magnet were assembled before pupils were served. This approach, made possible by the bilingual program that was already operating at the school, made the first project year proceed in an orderly fashion and will make the first evaluation of the effects of the instructional program, in 1982-83, likely to be valid.

Among the goals that were partially attained were two that dealt with the development of measuring instruments. The evaluators agree that these goals were subordinate to the start-up of the instructional program, and, if something had to be put off, they were reasonable choices.

The third objective that was only partially attained described the steps to be taken to attract pupils to the magnet program. As the value of these steps is not likely to be observable until the year following their being taken, a fair assessment of the drawing power of the magnet program will not be possible during the life of the present two year grant.

In conclusion, the first year of the Potter-Thomas Bilingual-bicultural Magnet project was devoted to the installation of the human, instructional, and equipment resources needed to provide increased individualization. During the second project year, it should be possible to answer questions about the effectiveness of the new instructional approaches.

TABLE 1

AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT IN THE POTTER-THOMAS LEARNING CENTER AND ON ORDER, AS OF 9/30/ 82

Name	Quantity	Description	Language(s)	Comments
Audiotronics Tutorette 800	1	Playback device and kits containing visuals with audio playback. Used to teach spoken and written language.	English and Spanish	On hand.
Language Master	5	Playback/record device. Cards have pictures and sound track. Pupils can listen to playback or record their response.	English	On hand. Teachers can prepare new materials in English or Spanish on blank cards.
Voxcom	1	Playback/record device similar to Language Master, but comes with a variety of instructional kits.	English	On hand. Teacher can prepare new materials in English or Spanish. Adhesive audio tape can be attached to pictures.
Systems 80	5	Console containing rear projection screen and record player that contains coordinated sound track. Pupils select buttons to register answers to items. Comes with learning kits for variety of instructional levels.	English	On hand. May be used with head sets for individualized instruction or with speaker for small group instruction.
Spellbinder	1	Answer elements fit into cue element. When correct fit is made, the device lights up. Programs available for several instructional areas.	English and Spanish	On hand. Programs for arithmetic, phonics, capitalization. Teacher can make local materials.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Name	Quantity	Description	Language(s)	Comments
Step-board	1	A cue is held by board. Elements of answers fit cue like a puzzle.	English	On hand. Materials for number and language concepts.
Charlie	1	Plastic robot holds program cards, makes noises and lights when correct answer is given.	English and Spanish	Partly delivered. Comes with 64 language and math programs. Teacher can also make programs.
Record Player	1	Single play.		On hand.
Tape Recorder	1	Cassette		On hand.
Projector	1	Handles slides and filmstrips.		On hand.
Typewriter	1	Primer Type.		On order.

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